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EDITH KERMIT ROOSEVELT SAYS: Even Spies Deserve Some Privacy

The Central Intelligence Agency's efforts to remain totally exempt from a "right to privacy" bill before the House has focused attention on how much power an intelligence agency has over its staff.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Sam J. Ervin, Democrat of North Carolina, chairman of the subcommittee on constitutional rights, would protect federal employees from the wholesale use of lie detectors and unwarranted governmental invasions of privacy. But when it comes to the CIA, the question arises how can a bill of rights for federal employees be reconciled with the necessities of national security.

A paragraph in the Ervin bill gives CIA directors and the National Security Agency—its counterpart in the Defense Department—authority to use polygraph tests in individual cases or to question applicants regarding their financial assets.

The CIA wants total exemption from the provisions of the bill, and gets it in the version passed Wednesday by the Senate 79 to 4.

This would bar applicants and employees from recourse to appeal procedures whenever they thought their constitutional procedures were being violated.

Obviously, the character and vulnerabilities of CIA applicants are of utmost concern to the agency. Employees have access to sensitive material on which the survival of the nation depends.

We know that there is a constant effort to seduce or blackmail employees by foreign powers. Thus, questions concerning drinking habits or sexual deviations are certainly relevant.

Obviously, an intelligence agency exactly as a police department requires contacts inside undesirable and opposing groups. But such individuals need not be direct employees.

A system exists just for this situation. Staff members known as "cut-outs," whose connections are not known on the outside, make the necessary personal contacts, using any cover story that fits. There is no need to put such undesirables inside the organization.

What disturbs Sen. Ervin is that the agency is asking applicants questions which are only remotely related to its security mission. Secretaries are quizzed regarding their love for their mothers or their belief in God. They are even asked about their bathroom habits and the subject matter of their dreams.

Apparently, every free wheeling psychiatrist has unlimited power to satisfy his own version of what must be told by a young girl or a newlywed.

According to Sen. Ervin we are losing the talents of many qualified people who would otherwise choose to serve their government because applicants consider such questions degrading.

Ervin, who incidentally is friendly to CIA, said in a Senate speech, "The idea that any government agency is entitled to the 'whole man' and knowledge and control of all the details of his personal and community life unrelated to

his employment or to law enforcement is more appropriate for totalitarian countries than for a society of freedom."

This sort of concern is being voiced by legislators such as Sen. Roman Hruska, Republican of Nebraska, who like Ervin is friendly to CIA and who opposed efforts to set up a so-called watchdog committee to further supervise it.

Sen. Hruska, a member of the subcommittee on constitutional rights, declared:

"I have great faith in them (the CIA) and I have great faith in their ability to accomplish their mission. But at the same time, they cannot be permitted to use methods that will trample upon the constitutional rights of their employees or applicants for employment. The record shows they have used such employment practices."

Required donations of time and money that have been

made obligatory by the Orwellian use of the word "voluntary" is an example of what would be barred under the Ervin bill.

Testimony before the constitutional rights subcommittee has revealed that at least one federal department, by regulation, requested employees to participate in specific community activities promoting "antipoverty," "beautification" and "equal employment." They were told to make speeches on many subjects, to supply grass seed for beautification projects and to paint other people's houses.

Sen. Ervin voiced concern over the possibility of domestic activities by the CIA in the field of politics.

There can be no substitute for a personnel from the top down which has developed a tradition of service in safeguarding their country, not in playing politics.

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